The Stars and Stripes

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WHOSE FUNERAL IS IT?

There are a great many splendid things being said and done in the States incident to the American soldier's return. And, as might be expected, a great many things equally as silly.

The American soldier believes that this war has been fought for something very spiritual and yet very tangible, and that the peace to follow is to be a worthy one. He will return to face life with the same high courage with which he confronted death. He feels sure of the welcome he will find, and he hopes to slide back quietly and unostentatiously into harness and help pull the load of a bigger, better world.

To programs of land reclamation and vocational training, insurance protection, and help for the maimed and blind the returning soldier looks forward as a measure of justice which he hopes will be worked out to a consummation in keeping with the new order of things.

There are, however, unfortunately, a great many people in the States with lots of time and nothing to do, to whom it ought to be suggested that he does not appreciate the charity campaign now in full swing. He doesn't object to his old uniform and some of its accessories, nor to the extra month's pay—that is an intimate little matter between himself and his Uncle. But when he picks up the paper and reads in, perhaps, nine out of 15 items some novel proposition, rather vague, but nevertheless entirely suggestive of the charitable intentions of the authors, he feels very much like a man who has left home and upon returning finds someone else installed in the best chambers and the word "welcome" on the cellar door.

One State is planting trees for us, another naming pigs for us, all the hens in another State laying eggs for us, and someone else is planning to make New York policemen out of us. Some governors are calling the politicians together and proclaiming that something has got to be done with us, and committees are being appointed (with salaries) to look into the matter. Some are recommending that all of us be sent back to the farm and others that we be hired by the Government.

What a tremendous awakening is in store for all these dear people when the soldier sets foot again upon the old sod, shakes the dust of battle from his clothes, and wades into things with a breeze that will blow all the charity boards and governors' committees out of his way forever!

THE EVIL SOWER

The suppression of rumors was not, unfortunately, included in the armistice terms. Not that all of them, or even many of them, or, for the purposes of this discussion, any of them, come from Germany. The story that martial law had been proclaimed in seven or 12 or 19 American cities, for instance—the number is never the same and neither are the names of the cities—might have started in Germany. But it could just as easily have started in the guardhouse as the result of a misinterpreted letter from home, or of no letter at all.

There are people in the Army, as there are elsewhere, who will swallow anything. That is their concern. But with the A.E.F.'s main topic of conversation, the war, now definitely sidetracked, these gullibles have more time for talking. That is our concern.

A man can be a traitor after "cease firing" just as certainly as he could have been in the heat of battle. And an innocent traitor can do as much harm by spreading a vicious rumor as an intentional one can. And it is harmful to picture for the delectation of one's fellowmen and soldiers an America riotous and hysterical with the cry of "Give us back our boys!" Of course, America wants her boys. But she doesn't want them spreading lies.

A BEER AND A SANDWICH

When Bismarck enunciated the principle that the best place to have a war was in somebody else's territory he said a sage and far-sighted mouthful. And Germany sagely and far-sightedly did her best to follow that principle from 1914 to 1918, with the result that only her fringes have been touched—amid the smoking ruins of her neighbors, her own hearth, for all its sorrows, is clean-swept and unmolested. The Chemin des Dames is gutted and black with the ugly aftermath of war; the Rheinstrasse is as neat as ever.

In Coblenz you will walk along a clean street (that was never splattered by a Bertha's iron scales) into a neat café (that never shook from a Gotha's bomb) and drink a tall one from a brewery which has been assaulted by nothing worse than a war tax. It is good. It is comfortable. It is clean.

With its roofs and walls intact, why shouldn't it be?

LETTERS AND LETTERS

The gathering together, sifting and sorting of the five hundred best letters written by soldiers of the A.E.F. and putting them into a book is something of an undertaking, but, nothing daunted, one American has tackled the job. He proposes to call in the letters from one end of the broad land to the other by means of advertising and to submit the fruits of his research to a representative committee of distinguished American citizens.

If he can find five hundred letters that have been fortunate enough to escape the home paper, his book ought to be a great success.

Certainly there are many letters which by one means or another have managed to ooze into the States with much valuable information and interest, and a well-prepared and representative collection of them should prove a real contribution to the literature of the war.

Such a book, however, demands a companion piece. It would be fine if there could go with it five hundred of the best letters from home received in the A.E.F. For devotion, for inspiration, for high faith and sustaining loyalty, for all that goes to make big, true Americanism, there are thousands of such letters hidden away in the doughboy's pocket.

STEADY, MEN

Now that the Boche is no longer offering target and diversion for members of the A.E.F., a number of bored soldiers are putting the pep they used to have behind the bayonet into violent night-raids of letter-writing. The old stuff was all right. It brought the Boche over kamerading. But some of it now is ill-timed. While the editors of this newspaper have no intention of throwing up their hands before the mordant pen-points, they sometimes do feel like throwing up their job (if it could be done) when they meet the morning mail.

Much of the ink barrage is well-aimed and effective. Some is ammunition wasted on a rabbit instead of an enemy offensive.

Perhaps the worst gunmanship is that directed against the historical articles now running in the paper. Don't fire men, till you see the whites of their eyes! The series is far from complete. No one is attacking the glorious record of the Umpty Division. The histories are written by divisions not by engagements, because the former method is simpler, and your part in the Great War will appear (same size type) in good time.

As to the authority of the historian, here it is with his own interpretation:

J. M. Hanson, Capt. F.A., G-2-D, G.H.Q., A.P.O. 706, A.E.F. or "Captain Frequently Accused Giving Divisions Glory Hotly Questioned Among Persons of 706 Additional Establishments."

It takes a brave historian to record the deeds of living men at best, and these records, written almost before the ink on the official reports is dry, are no exception. It might be added, however, that of all the complaints and protests only a very few have been justified, and these few were nearly all necessary omissions—necessary because somewhere there must be a limit on the depth to which they go into detail. They cannot be the diaries of every fighting unit.

THE WAY THEY SEE THINGS

A New York reporter who covered the arrival of a returning transport, among whose passengers were a number of members of the 28th Division, A.E.F., made a startling discovery. Beginning with the statement that the division had had a citation, he went on to deduce that every member thereof had been decorated in consequence. As proof thereof, he pointed out that every man of the 28th who got ashore wore a red keystone on his left shoulder, and wound up by saying, "The division was so dod-gasted good that every member of it had to be decorated."

No doubt the division was dod-gasted good. A.E.F. divisions have had the painfully regular habit of being just that good. Such being the case, it is a shame to spoil the story by explaining it.

The incident in question doesn't prove much of anything, but it indicates that the folks at home are likely to have some queer ideas about the war when we get back.

LIEBKNECHT

From the refuge haven of Amerongen, in the neutral seclusion of Holland, must have risen a sigh the other day, a sigh of relief—not exactly of unbounded or profound relief, to be sure, for it would take several windfalls these days to restore to a Hohenzollern his old-time confidence in the scheme of things, but of relief none the less.

For Liebknecht was dead, or at least reported dead—Liebknecht, the stormy petrel of Sozialdemokratie; Liebknecht, the common soldier, who, returning on leave from the front when Prussia was still sipping (sparingly withal) the wine of triumph, struck fist against palm in the Reichstag, of which he was a member, thrust it clenched under the chins of the beribboned officialdom of Prussia, and spent the rest of the war in jail for his pains.

His freedom came with the first letting of blood in the streets of Berlin. He saw the orgy through, dying with a bullet in his back when he tried to escape following the collapse of the Spartacist cause—or so the reports say. He strode the blast, he rode the storm—and melted in the first piercing ray of the sun of law and order. He was probably sincere enough to have wished his fiery gods to will it so.

THANKS

To mark this anniversary issue, we have devoted some space in this newspaper to a history of its production. We have let Private Tom, Sergeant Dick and Colonel Harry into our theater and then pulled up the scenes so that they could see the ropes and wires and lights and thunder-machine, so that they could watch the O.D. shirt-sleeved mechanics busy at their crazy job of putting on the show.

We have done this in answer to a thousand and one questions. We have done it because the A.E.F. owns this newspaper, and we of the staff owed it an accounting of our trusteeship.

But no account of the means by which THE STARS AND STRIPES has been produced would be complete without our acknowledgments of the generous co-operation our newsgatherers have received from all the privates and most of the generals in the Army. Above all, we must thank the thousands upon thousands who have contributed to these columns. Probably no publication in the history of journalism ever received in a single year so many contributions, one and all submitted without any thought of remuneration. Famous writers, writers who will be famous, writers who will never be famous—they have all chipped in.

And the best things THE STARS AND STRIPES ever printed were not written by any of its staff. They came in in the morning mail. Thanks.

The Army's Poets

The Army Poet's Column in this, the anniversary number, is the work of the non-editorial members of the staff, who have been modestly engaged, during the last year, on the hardest part of the job of getting the darned old paper out.

CORPORAL'S CALL

(American scientists have discovered a method of removing the bray from the Army mule. Mules in future wars will be unable to betray the location of ammunition trains, etc., by their raucous voices.—News Item.)

When first we came to foreign lands
The native jackass yodeled for us,
So like the bugles and the bands
We learned to love his daily chorus.
More keenly pitched than reveille,
It shook the rafters of his stall
Or cross the sward rolled heavily—
We knew it as the "Corporal's call."

Now as the days creep into weeks,
December slowly drags toward June,
Back at the ports, each doughboy seeks
That old familiar martial tune.
He only hears the distant sea
Or clicking trans-Atlantic cable—
How dreadful lonesome he must be!
No welcome bray from field or stable!

Science, that made great cannon roar,
Noise belching from each mammoth gun,
A million dinning sounds that bore
Disaster to the quavering Hun,
What ignominious works of peace
Now claim you as a willing tool:
The brains that saved a world now cease
To function—save to gag a mule.

R. S. J.

HIS GRIEF

Well, Pal, the game's near over, and we need
but one more run;
The Doughboy started batting and made second
on the Hun;
A single from the gay Marines and Doughboy
went to third
To rest there while the Big Guns hit a bunt that
was a bird—
The bags are full, we're on our toes and rooting
hard as hell
For Wilson and his clean-up hit, the blow that
soon will tell
The dizzy world we've won the game, and played
it bully well.
* * * * *
But when I leave the grand stand, it's toot
sweet home for me,
For I can't share the gate receipts—I'm in the
Q.M.C.

JOSEPH G. DALY, Sgt. 1st Cl., Q.M.C.

A.E.F. MOTHER GOOSE

Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater,
Had a wife and couldn't keep her.
Went to France as his country's guest
And Uncle Sammy did the rest.

Simple Simon met a pieman
On the way to chow.
Said Simple Simon to the pieman,
"This is luck, I vow."
The pieman made a clearance sale
And Si spent all his pay,
And lost his well-earned rep of being
Such a simp that day.

Jack and Jill went up the hill
To get a pail of l'eau.
Jack fell down and broke his crown.
(Too much vin rouge, you know.)

Little Jack Horner sat in a corner
Eating his Christmas pie.
But it came in a nine by four by three,
So most of it was shy.

Little Bo Peep, she lost her sheep,
And thought she'd find them soon.
But she made a poor guess, for the officers' mess
Had mutton chops that noon.

Old King Cole is a merry old soul,
Oh, a merry old soul is he,
For he's on his way to the U.S.A.
Across the deep blue sea.

A. J. M.

A LANDSCAPE

Artist, you would paint here!
You would glory in setting sun,
Canal, river, roads and solemn trees—
Cows slow moving, slender boy—
All else seems waiting . . . .

What is coming? Or do you wait
Without expecting? I have been
Where evening brings roads jammed with troops,
Where fading sunsets stir to work
As sunrise calls to men at home.
Nature, why are you at peace?
Cows, are you unaware?

Red-tiled houses, wooden shoes,
(Romantic but not comforting)
Would you see mankind and—much else
Go down into the village there
And find disorder, squabbling, sadness,
Yet here—not far away—all things seem right.

Man, you're a funny creation—or what ever;
You go about creating work and trouble
scheming;
Money is the root of your evil? Common lie
Or truth, maybe, but what result?
Gee, I hear a fellow sawing on a fiddle.
Ha! Perhaps he would escape from life?
More likely win a maid's esteem.

DONALD CLAYBORN.

ORPHELINS DE GUERRE

Little Orphans of the War,
Little beings with hearts so sore,
You need not suffer any more.
Little beings sans père, sans mère,
We who came from Over There
To free you from the Prussian snare
Shall, too, your youth of sorrow share.
You, too tender, young, to feel
The poignant prick of Sorrow's steel,
May lay your little heads in rest
Upon the broad and sheltering breast
Of those whose hearts have stood the test
When gage of East was flung to West.

Pvt. 1st Cl. MEYER AGEN.

DRINK TO ME ONLY

Drink to me only with thine eyes
(Though God made them to wink with);
It's "Taps" at last for Scotch and ryes
And things we used to drink with.
O Land, thou once were Paradise
Of liquoring and wat'ring places;
What made the Councils of the Wise
Transform you into an oasis?

Drink to me only with thine eyes
(Though they were made for flashing);
The corpse of Johnnie Walker lies
With others just as dashing
Beneath the faded Edelweiss.
O Land, we ask, don't thusly shame us,
Bring back the schooners—largest size—
Of that which made Milwaukee famous!

Drink to me only with thine eyes
(Though they were made for sleeping);
Deep in the dusk are longing sighs
Of kindred spirits vigil keeping.
O Land, revoke that law which tries,
Without appropriate explanations,
To let your Councils of the Wise
Put Carrie in the League of Nations!

S. H. C.

IN A CANTEEN

They were seated in a canteen,
Red Cross Number Nine.
There the homelike feeling
Led their thoughts far from the Rhine.

Both were en permission,
And were tired with the chase
Of doing Paree in their three days
To see each wonder place.

They talked of kings and castles,
Of boulevards and such,
But with their little homeburg
Could they compare?—not much.

Each showed some faded photos
Sent by loved ones o'er the sea,
Of Ma, and Pa and sisters
"And the service flag for me."

W. F. GERMAIN, S.S.D.

GUESS THE TUNE

We're glad that we came, just the same,
And we'll stay till the day that it's finee;
We'd like for to hike down to Brest,
For we need a—little—rest,
But here we are stuck out of luck,
And we never shall bellow or whinny—
Home we long for, but still we are strong for
THE STARS AND STRIPES,
THE STARS AND STRIPES—
But not forever.

NEW ENGLAND MEMBER OF STAFF.

WHAT WE WON

THEIR BROTHER'S KEEPER

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:

The day before Christmas, a poor, shy, hungry, ill-clad Russian came into the vicinity of the 269th Aero Squadron. His main purpose was to get food. His figure was thin and his face wrinkled from the horrors of more than four years of war. During the early stages of the conflict he was made a prisoner. The tale of hardships, cruelties and persecutions at the hand of the Hun was indelibly written on his face in lines one would never forget.

His willingness and honest appearance made an impression on the 269th's mess sergeant, who set him to peeling spuds for the big even on Christmas Day. Not being able to communicate with him in English, German or French, we finally thought of one of our men, named Smokoska, who could speak some Polish, and who found that Pete, as he soon came to be called, could also speak Polish. Through Smok we learned his story.

After getting the consent of Lt. Hale, our commanding officer, Pete was initiated into the Grand Order of K.P.'s. We than began to investigate his clothing record and found that he was minus beaucoup clothes. Every man in the outfit became interested in Pete, so we soon had him all Yanked up.

Then came Christmas Day, with all the spirit that we always associate with that time. Every man was set in readiness to plant his feet under the mahogany and enjoy a real honest-to-goodness meal, and they did enjoy every bit of it, too. But there was something else to their Christmas joy. They gave physical comfort, ambition, confidence, hope for the future to a poor, crushed soul. The boys, being 100 per cent Americans, every one, shared their happiness and joy with Pete. He ate the same, drank the same. There was that big, kind-hearted feeling to help the other fellow along manifest in them all. Pete had more cigarettes and candy than any man in the squadron. On payday Pete received more than a private's pay in France from the boys.

As night came Pete lay down and slept as he had not since he was born; dreamed of a land far away that he had never known—a land of equality and freedom. He became a new man. A human being with a soul he showed himself—a man among men, who treated their fellowman "as they would have others do to them." What greater joy has life for either?

As time progressed Pete became a valuable worker around the kitchen. There never was a thing he saw to be done that he did not gladly do. He was almost immaculate about his person and his work in the kitchen. He would touch no food either for himself or to serve to the boys without carefully washing his hands. The first time he saw the cooks going for their bath he dropped his scrub brush and went along.

Though the men in the kitchen knew no Russian and Pete no English he picked up the lingo of the Army kitchen quickly. Several of the men took special pains to teach him English, and he showed himself an able student.

Pete was not much of a rounder. He had only two passes—issued by the mess sergeant to explain Pete to the M.P.'s. He was gone only for a few hours at a time, and always returned perfectly sober. We don't know whether Pete was a prohibitionist or an anti, but he never hit up any stronger drink than coffee.

Pete did not stand reveille, but he was always on the job in good time, the first man in the morning and the last at night. During this time he was picking up and becoming a full-fledged heavyweight.

Then, as a cloud from a clear sky, came the order from Headquarters. It was suspected that some of the Russians wandering about the post had caused serious trouble, and Pete had to suffer with the rest. Every one was determined that he should have an honorable discharge. We were sorry to see him go. He was such a royal fellow beneath his foreign tongue. Every officer in the squadron knew Pete and was interested in his welfare, but orders had come from above and must be carried out.

The heart of every man went out to him. They determined to send him off a better man than he was when he arrived in the squadron. In regular American style of brotherhood, Fred Hummel, our big top kicker, passed the hat around the mess hall, and all gave to insure Pete comfort until something definite could be done for his class.

When he was told that he must leave the next morning his eyes filled with tears. He was again a man without home or country. He was again to wander into nowhere. Yet it was not all nowhere, for he saw definitely a place—far off, 'tis true—where men lived together according to the spirit that he found in his hour of need with the 269th.

ENLISTED MEN, 269th Aero Sqdn.

MUSIC HATH CHARMS

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:

The day following the capture of Romagne by American troops, the surgeon of a Medical battalion set up an aid station in a shell-racked house and hung out the Red Cross. Now, Mike Fogarty had been on the lines doing first-aid work with his company up to this time, and the shells that came crashing into the town at intervals seemed very tame to Mike.

"Be gad," he said, "I'll be after looking over the town a bit." So off he strode to see what he could find that Fritz, in his hurried departure, had left. Soon he returned to the aid station, with glowing, Irish cheeks.

"Sure," he said, "and the Heinies have been after leavin' a fine piano in the saloon up the street." A detachment was immediately organized to salvage the piano. A wheelbarrow was discovered and the piano delicately balanced on it, and the party started down the torn and littered street.

Now, Fritz had an observation balloon right up the street, and the observer must have resented the salvage of that piano, for a shell immediately struck not a hundred yards behind them. They increased their pace, and Fritz increased his range. All went well until Mike, who was steering the precious load, ran squarely into a stone, and his fine piano went splashing into the gutter.

This necessitated further delay while the piano was being balanced again, and the race once more began. Success this time crowned their efforts, and Miss Piano was tumbled into the aid station, leaking mud from every seam. She was tenderly nursed and dried before the trench stove that Fritz had kindly left for that purpose. After drying her out, Mike touched up the keys and found it satisfactory, even to his artistic ear, and proceeded to sing his favorie Irish song: "When an Irish Boy Was Godfather to a French Baby."

READER.

A REGULAR MESS

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:

Perhaps you can use this, and no harm done if you can't. But it really happened here in our regiment while we were still on the line somewhere west of St. Mihiel. We had a good joke on some Headquarters company sergeants the other day, and a mess sergeant in the bunch at that.

They planned a big feast, and in order to make the menu better they wanted a rabbit, because corned willy comes into the bill of fare pretty often anyway and they hated to include it. There weren't any civilians living here, so it looked for a while as though they were out of luck. But one of them could parley-voo a little French, so he asked some French soldiers if they knew where they could get a rabbit. It was agreed that for 90 francs the Frenchmen were to get a rabbit and skin it.

They got it—that is the rabbit—but after the feast was over the rabbit turned out to be a cat that we had in our stables, and the joke was on the mess sergeant who had cooked it. But the best part was that the Frenchman every few minutes would howl "meow," and then they would almost burst from laughing.

ERNEST J. LOWRY, Supply Co., 150th F.A.

YOU WIN

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:

Cooties again.

They say a poet won a medal for writing the following World's Shortest Poem:

Adam
Had'em.

I wish to submit the following abbreviated version:

dam
'em.

Pvt. ARTHUR MANN.
Bty. E, 12th F.A.

THE DEPOTS

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:

There is one big group of S.O.L.'s who have never been mentioned in your paper, as far as I have seen. I mean the Depot divisions and the divisions broken up as replacements. I personally know of several such—for example, the 41st, 76th and 83rd Divisions, which were doomed to function as Depots, and the 31st, 34th, 84th, 86th and probably others which as soon as they had disembarked were broken up as replacements, losing their identity as divisions.

Just think it over. These divisons were trained as combat units. They went through all the monotonous training back home, and at last came over, with all the esprit and enthusiasm that has marked the combat units. They expected to have their chance at the front, but the exigencies of the war made replacements more necessary than new combat units. They saw the units which they had learned to love and believe in broken up. They saw their comrades scattered from Bordeaux to Lorraine. And the vast majority of them did their work wherever their lot fell, and kept their mouths shut.

Then the Depot divisions have not had the easy life which the men at the front seem to credit to the S.O.S. I know of many men in the 2nd Depot (83rd) Division, for example, who worked almost literally night and day, week after week, month after month, receiving raw replacement troops from the States, giving them all possible instruction in rifle and gas in the ten days or two weeks allowed them, and then sending them on up to that front to which they themselves would give their very eyes to go.

I have known two officers and 50 enlisted men to have a company of from 800 to 1,000 replacement troops to billet, feed, instruct, discipline and father while giving them this brief preparation.

Replacements came and went at all hours, necessitating hours almost as fatiguing and irregular as those required of the combat units. Billets were in small villages no more luxurious than those near the firing line. Training was kept up regardless of weather. Day after day was spent on the muddy firing points or in the slimy pits, at the most monotonous of work, and half the night often was spent billeting new men or doing some of the thousand other things necessary in company administration.

The combat troops need not be afraid that the Depots will try to steal the glory of the fighting units. They are the first ones to give the men at the front all the credit. It was their pride to send the replacement troops forward just as well prepared as possible in order to help "up there where the boys are doing the real work."

Now, I am not pleading for glory for these Depot divisions. They know they don't deserve it and they don't want it. But something needed for their self-respect. Why not print a line to let them know that they have done something commendable in the war, even if ill luck did deprive them of a chance to show their fighting qualities. None of them can go home with medals or souvenirs of battle or stories of the front. They do not deserve the same measure of gratitude that is the due of the men who have fought and died. But as long as praise is being passed around unstintedly, they do deserve just enough crumbs of it to prevent their feeling that somehow they have failed to do their bit.

JOHN F. HALL,
1st Lieut., Inf.

[The glory of the Depot Divisions is the glory of the men who went out from them to the front as replacements and were absorbed into combat outfits, sharing their ups and downs and helping to develop and maintain the esprit de corps of the foster division of which they became a part. But they would have been poor soldiers had not the Depots so rounded out their training that they knew just what to do the minute they reached the line—and did it.—EDITOR.]

EXCUSE US, NURSE

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:

Kindly correct the error in your January 17 edition relative to your article, "'Phone Girls Dance With Heir to Throne," stating that nurses were present. In answer to this statement, I wish to say emphatically that no nurse attended this dance, as it is against the rules of the A.E.F. for nurses to attend public dances.

EMMA QUANDT, A.N.C., Third Army.